

CONSTRUCTING THE NEW CITIZENSHIP THROUGH THE MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE BLACK  
COMMUNITY IN CAMPINAS, BRAZIL

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by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines contemporary racial politics and constructions of citizenship in the Municipal Council for the Development and Participation of the Black Community in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil. The central questions of the study are: (1) in relation to citizenship, how have Afro-Brazilian organizations, social movements, and other institutions framed the issues that are affecting the Black community, and what solutions/processes are they suggesting to deal with them? (2) What kind of dialogue/interaction have Council efforts produced between groups in society and the municipal government and how has this contributed to a discourse of “new citizenship” for Afro-Brazilians? And (3) how can analyzing Afro-Brazilian politics of identity through a framework of citizenship help interpret struggles over identity in relation to the Councils?

A study of the Council illuminates what types of organizations are involved in the process of redefining representation in an urban context and the difficulties being negotiated in constituting both Afro-Brazilian political identity and institutionalizing new state spaces for citizenship in municipal administrations. The process of deliberation is constituted by historical formations of race relations as well as by both present power relations within the Council between representatives, and those between the Black movement and the local government more broadly. The case of the Council allows the tension filled terrain and negotiation of these hegemonic relations to be understood through political practices intended to increase citizen participation and voice. The experiences and impressions of Council processes provide insight into how individual participants situate themselves and how they understand democratic participation and identity formation in relation to the Black community.

The main goal of the Council is to advance racial equality through the valorization, affirmation, and development of Black community. They orchestrate

activities in the areas of education, health, culture, and preservation of patrimony, as well as creating channels for public expression of Afro-Brazilian culture and public protests to bring attention to issues they confront. An examination of the Council indicates both the difficulty of creating an understanding of the racial theme as it affects individuals in varied and complex ways, as well as the complexity of constructing a unified identity politics based on race in a context where race has not constituted a primary form of identification and where Black culture and community are diverse.